

**A FURTHER RECORD OF *DANAUS CHRYSIPPUS CRATIPPUS*
(C. FELDER, 1860) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE: DANAINAE)
FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA**

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Abstract

A female *Danaus chrysippus cratippus* (C. Felder) is recorded from the Darwin suburb of Wanguri, Northern Territory, on 13 April 2015. This record represents only the third location for the species within Australian limits, the two others being the Black Point and Smith Point areas of Cobourg Peninsula, Northern Territory, and Thursday Island in Torres Strait, Queensland.

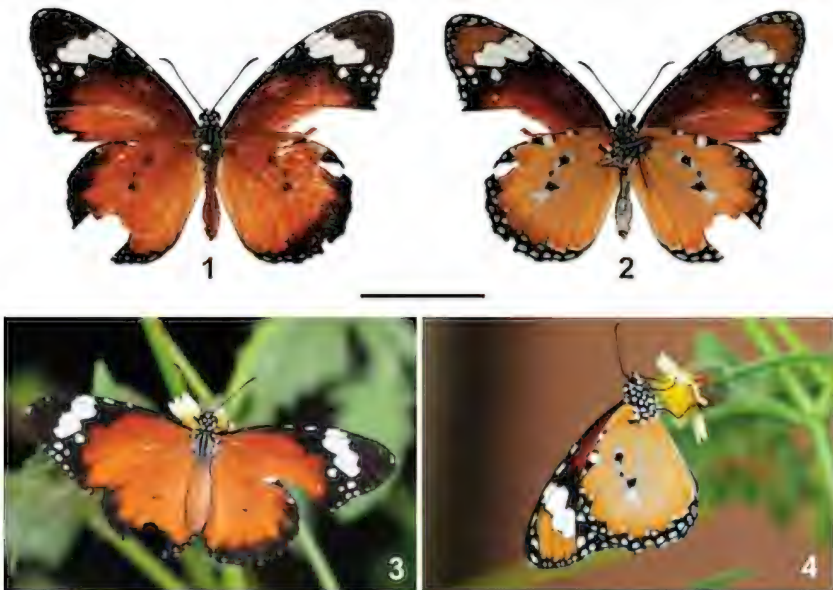
Introduction

The Plain Tiger, *Danaus chrysippus* (Linnaeus, 1758), is a polytypic species distributed widely in the Afrotropical and Oriental Regions (Smith 2014). In Australia, however, it is rarely encountered, being known previously only from the Black Point and Smith Point areas of Cobourg Peninsula, Northern Territory [a male collected in 1977 (Common and Waterhouse 1981) and 13 specimens collected in 2007 (Braby 2014, Braby *et al.* 2015)] and from Thursday Island in southern Torres Strait, Queensland [a female collected in 1995 (Lambkin 2009)]. All of these specimens were collected from January to April, which is typically the monsoon or wet season in northern Australia, and all specimens have been assigned to the subspecies *D. chrysippus cratippus* (C. Felder, 1860), which is restricted to the eastern half of Wallacea (Braby *et al.* 2015). Permanent breeding populations of the species do not appear to be established on the Australian mainland, with all previous records representing either vagrants from Maluku and/or the Lesser Sunda Islands, or progeny from temporary colonisations that failed to establish.

The species is taxonomically and phylogenetically distinct from the well known Lesser Wanderer, *D. petilia* (Stoll, 1790) (Lushai *et al.* 2005, Braby *et al.* 2015), and is distinguished from that species by the following six phenotypic characters (see Braby *et al.* 2015): (1) the upperside ground colour is uniformly tawny brown or dark orange-brown, with the forewing discal cell and basal area of cell M₃ diffusely contrasted in darker brown; (2) the underside ground colour of the forewing is uniformly rusty brown or dark orange-brown, with the discal cell and basal area of cell M₃ a darker shade of rusty brown; (3) the length of the white subapical spot in cell M₂ of the forewing is significantly longer; (4) the white subapical spot in cell M₃ of the forewing is always present and significantly larger; (5) the width of the black marginal band on the upperside of the hindwing is significantly narrower, often enclosing a few white submarginal spots, with the inner edge of the band usually lacking the rusty brown suffusion; and (6) the black marginal band on the underside of the hindwing is narrower and usually encloses only a single row of white spots or, if two rows of spots are present, the inner row of spots is smaller and generally less distinct and adjacent to the band.

Observations

At Wanguri, an outer northern suburb of Darwin, NT (12.373°S, 130.886°E), a female *D. chrysippus cratippus* was observed feeding on flowers of *Tridax procumbens* L. (Asteraceae) at 1130 hrs on 13 April 2015. The specimen (Figs 1-4) was in worn condition and was located near a shopping centre at the intersection of Gsell Street and Vanderlin Drive. At the time of observation I had no collecting equipment with me, but I was able to photograph and collect the specimen by hand. The female was kept alive for 48 hrs, fed with diluted honey-sugar solution and placed inside a plastic bag supplied with fresh cuttings of *Cynanchum carnosum* (R.Br.) Schltr. (Apocynaceae) in a shade house, but did not oviposit during this period.



Figs 1-4. Female *Danaus chrysippus cratippus* from Darwin, NT, showing: (1) upperside, (2) underside, (3-4) feeding from flowers of *Tridax procumbens*. Scale bar for Figs 1 and 2 = 20 mm.

Discussion

The specimen agrees with the diagnosis of Braby *et al.* (2015) in that it possesses all six phenotypic characters of *D. chrysippus cratippus* that distinguish it from *D. petilia*. The specimen was collected at the end of the wet season and presumably had arrived following the summer monsoon trade winds from Indonesia, which typically occur during December-March. Darwin is located approximately 200 km south-west of Black Point on

Cobourg Peninsula and a straight line drawn between these two locations is perpendicular to the direction of the monsoon trade winds, suggesting that the specimen was unlikely to have originated from Cobourg Peninsula.

References

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